

**Amendments to the Claims:**

The listing of the claims will replace all the prior versions, and listings, of claims in the applications:

**Listing of Claims:**

Claim 1. (Previously presented) Apparatus for self-clearing of clogs developed between adjacent ends of downstream and upstream conveyors adapted to carry products thereon in the course of transfer of the products past a gap defined between the conveyors, comprising

a shield disposed between the adjacent ends of the conveyors and configured to cover less than all of the gap between the conveyors and having a proximal side edge disposed adjacent the end of the upstream conveyor, thereby defining an opening for the discharge of debris associated with the products being transferred between the conveyors through said opening,

means for mounting said shield for selected degrees of covering relationship to the gap between the conveyors, means for biasing said shield toward a position of maximum covering of the gap while permitting automatic movement of said shield toward a position of reduced covering of the gap as a function of the application of a force against said shield occasioned by the initiation of a clog by debris associated with the products being transferred between said shield and the upstream conveyor, wherein said means for mounting said shield comprises shaft means rotatably mounting said proximal side edge of said shield across the width of the gap, said width being measured substantially perpendicular to the forward direction of movement of the downstream conveyor; and

hinge means for mounting said shaft for hinged movement generally laterally between the adjacent ends of the conveyors and within the gap.

Claims 2. (Canceled)

Claims 3. (Canceled)

Claim 4. (Previously presented) The apparatus of Claim 1 and including means for biasing said hinge means to position said shield toward a position of maximum covering of the gap.

Claim 5. (Previously presented) The apparatus of Claim 1 and including means for receipt of opposite ends of said shaft for guiding and limiting the permissible hinged movement of said shield.

Claim 6. (Previously presented) Apparatus for the preferential separation of debris from wood logs being conveyed from a first location to a chipper comprising

a downstream conveyor for receiving the logs and debris,

an upstream conveyor onto which said logs are transferred prior to their

introduction to the chipper,

said downstream conveyor having a receiving end and said upstream conveyor

having a discharge end, said ends of said conveyors being disposed adjacent one another and defining an open gap therebetween,

a shield disposed between said adjacent ends of said conveyors and configured to cover less than all of said gap, said shield including a proximal side edge disposed adjacent said

end of said upstream conveyor, thereby defining an opening for the preferential discharge of debris through said opening,

means for mounting said shield for selected degrees of covering relationship to the gap between the conveyors, means for biasing said shield toward a position of maximal covering of the gap while permitting automatic movement of said shield toward a position of reduced covering of the gap as a function of the application of a force against said shield occasioned by the initiation of a clog by the products being transferred between said shield and the upstream conveyor, wherein said means for mounting said shield comprises shaft means rotatably mounting said proximal side edge of said shield across the width of said gap, said width being measured substantially perpendicular to the forward direction of movement of said downstream conveyor; and

hinge means for mounting said shaft for hinged movement generally laterally between said adjacent ends of said conveyors and within said gap.

Claim 7. (Canceled)

Claim 8. (Canceled)

Claim 9. (Previously presented) The apparatus of Claim 6 and including means for biasing said hinge means to position said shield toward a position of maximum covering of said gap.

Claim 10. (Previously presented) The apparatus of Claim 6 and including means for receipt of opposite ends of said shaft for guiding and limiting the permissible hinged movement of said shield.

Claim 11. (Canceled)

Claim 12. (Canceled)

Claim 13. (Previously presented) An apparatus, comprising

an upstream conveyor and a downstream conveyor having adjacent ends configured to carry articles thereon wherein the conveyors are separated by a gap; and

at least one shield disposed between the adjacent ends of the conveyors, wherein the shield covers less than all of the gap between the conveyors and has a proximal side edge disposed adjacent the end of the upstream conveyor, thereby defining an opening for discharging debris associated with the articles being transferred between the conveyors through said opening;

wherein

the at least one shield is mounted on a shaft configured to select degrees of covering relationship of the gap by the shield; and

the shaft is mounted for hinged movement laterally between the adjacent ends of the conveyors and within the gap.

Claim 14. (Previously presented) A method of transporting wood products and debris from the wood products, comprising,

separating the debris from the wood product with the apparatus according to Claim 13.

Claim 15. (Previously presented) An apparatus, comprising

an upstream conveyor and a downstream conveyer having adjacent ends configured to carry articles thereon wherein the conveyors are separated by a gap; and

at least one shield disposed between the adjacent ends of the conveyors, wherein the shield covers less than all of the gap between the conveyors and has a proximal side edge disposed adjacent the end of the upstream conveyor, thereby defining an opening for discharging debris associated with the articles being transferred between the conveyors through said opening; and

at least one hinged mounting means, wherein the hinged mounting means mounts the at least one shield so that a portion of the shield moves laterally between the adjacent ends of the conveyors and within the gap.

Claim 16. (Previously presented) The apparatus according to Claim 15, further comprising

at least one rotational mounting means, wherein the rotational mounting means further mounts the shield such that the proximal side edge of said shield rotates across the width of the gap, said width being measured substantially perpendicular to a forward direction of movement of the upstream conveyor so as to select degrees of covering by the shield of the gap.

Claim 17. (Previously presented) The apparatus according to Claim 16, wherein the at least one hinged mounting means mounts the shield and the rotational mounting means such that a portion

of the shield and a portion of the rotational mounting means moves laterally between the adjacent ends of the conveyors.

Claim 18. (Previously presented) The apparatus according to Claim 17, wherein the at least one rotational mounting means comprises a shaft.

Claim 19. (Previously presented) The apparatus according to Claim 18, wherein the at least one hinged mounting means mounts the shield and the shaft such that a portion of the shield and a portion of the shaft move laterally between the adjacent ends of the conveyor.

Claim 20. (Previously presented) The apparatus according to Claim 19, further comprising a means for guiding and limiting the lateral movement of the shield and the shaft.

Claim 21. (Previously presented) The apparatus according to Claim 17, further comprising a means for guiding and limiting the lateral movement of the shield and rotational mounting means.

Claim 22. (Previously presented) The apparatus according to Claim 15, further comprising a first biasing means wherein the first biasing means biases the hinged mounting means such that the proximate side edge of the shield is at a minimum desired separation distance from at least one of the adjacent ends of at least one of the conveyors.

Claim 23. (Previously presented) The apparatus according to Claim 22, further comprising  
at least one rotational mounting means, wherein the rotational mounting means further  
mounts the shield such that the proximal side edge of said shield rotates across the width of the  
gap, said width being measured substantially perpendicular to a forward direction of movement  
of the upstream conveyor so as to select degrees of covering by the shield of the gap.

Claim 24. (Previously presented) The apparatus according to Claim 23, further comprising  
a second biasing means wherein the second biasing means biases the rotational mounting means  
such that the proximate side edge of the shield is at a minimum desired separation distance from  
at least one of the adjacent ends of at least one of the conveyors.

Claim 25. (Previously presented) A method of transporting wood products and debris from the  
wood products, comprising,

separating the debris from the wood product with the apparatus according to Claim 15.

Claim 26. (Canceled)

Claim 27. (Canceled)

Claim 28. (Canceled)

Claim 29. (Canceled)

Claim 30. (Previously presented) A method of transporting wood products and debris from the  
wood products, comprising,

separating the debris from the wood product with the apparatus according to Claim 1.